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P21860.A01

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

: Tadashi HAYAKAWA

Group Art Unit: 2857

: 10/019,270

Examiner:

Filed : January 3, 2002

For : METHOD AND DEVICE FOR DISTANCE DETECTION

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Assistant Commissioner of Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir :

In accordance with the duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. §1.56, §1.97-1.98, Applicant hereby calls the following documents to the Examiner's attention:

In an International Search Report mailed on October 24, 2000 for counterpart International Application No. PCT/JP00/04971, the following document were cited:

Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. HEI 7-43456, which was published on February 14, 1995, was cited as an X-Category document (i.e., document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone) with respect to claims 1 and 2 of the International application. This document was also cited as a Y-Category document (i.e., document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art) with respect to claims 15-22 of the International application. The Examiner indicated that paragraphs [0002] to [0009], and Fig. 9 are relevant;

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European Patent Application No. EP 0 865 223 A2, which was published on September 16, 1998 and family member Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. HEI 10-322752, which was published on December 4, 1998, were cited as Y-Category documents with respect to claims 15-22 of the International application. The Examiner indicated that col. 2, lines 10-41; col. 8, line 31 to col. 9, line 6; and Figs. 1 and 2 of the EP document, and paragraphs [0008] to [0009], [0049], and Figs. 1 and 2 of the Japanese document are relevant;

Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. HEI 11-94933, which was published on April 9, 1999, was cited as a Y-Category document with respect to claims 15, 19 and 21 of the International application. The Examiner indicated that paragraphs [0002] to [0005] and Fig. 5 are relevant;

Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. HEI 8-327730, which was published on December 13, 1996, was cited as an A-Category document (i.e., document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance) with respect to claims 1-22 of the International application. The Examiner indicated that the full text, and Figs. 1 to 13 are relevant; and

Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. SHO 58-140661, which was published on August 20, 1983, was cited as an A-Category document with respect to claims 1-22 of the International application.

Applicant further calls the following documents to the Examiner's attention:

Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. HEI 5-122120, which was published on May 18, 1993. Applicant notes that this document is discussed on page 1 of the specification of the

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instant application;

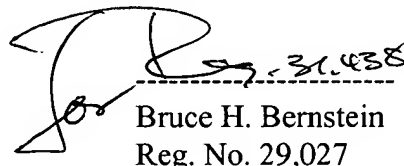
Japanese Laid Open Patent Publication No. HEI 9-318735, which was published on December 12, 1997; and

U.S. Patent No. 4,276,549 to TOMASI, which issued on June 30, 1981.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider the above materials and cite the patent documents. Copies of the above-noted documents, as well as English language Abstracts for all of the above-listed Japanese documents and a copy of the International Search Report, are attached and have been listed on a PTO-1449 Form which is also attached hereto. The Examiner is requested to initial the appropriate spaces on the attached PTO-1449 Form and to return a copy of the Form to Applicant with the next official communication in the present application to confirm consideration of these documents.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Tadashi HAYAKAWA



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March 27, 2002
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